



Library Resources: An Overview

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LIBRARY RESOURCES ARE VERY DIVERSE in character and enormous in quantity. For the most part, each type has had a different development and is likely to be affected in varying degrees by demographic and other factors.

In order to facilitate treatment, the field of resources has been divided into three parts, each handled by a separate author. *Books*: Trade books, textbooks, reference books, pamphlets, monographs (nonserial), paperbacks, and out-of-print books. *Serials*: Periodicals, government publications, technical research reports, monographic series, and newspapers. *Audio-visual materials*: Maps, recordings (music), nonmusical recordings, microreproduction, motion pictures, and other media.

The preceding list does not cover all categories, because some (such as "manuscripts") have been omitted, mainly for lack of space. Furthermore, the types, in some cases, are not mutually exclusive, but they do represent the commonly accepted groupings.

The impact of projected population changes upon library resources is illustrated here by three examples. Hauser and Taitel indicate in the preceding *Library Trends* issue that the number of senior citizens will increase from 1960 to 1980 by close to 50 per cent and will form a 10 per cent segment of the total population.¹ This gain will result undoubtedly in a marked increase in the demand for library materials. The actual amount and kind of this increase will depend upon a number of factors involving the older population, such as educational attainment, mental and physical health, housing conditions, economic status, use of leisure time, mobility, and will to migrate to various parts of the country. Predictions about the number and use of resources by the senior citizens must be weighed and adapted with these elements in mind.

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Another projection for 1960 to 1980 relates to the changes in the educational characteristics of the population, such as growth in school population, decreasing illiteracy, and the increases in the proportions of high school graduates and of college graduates in the total population. It seems obvious that these gains in educational accomplishments will also affect the number and kind of library materials required to meet the needs during the next two decades.

The changes in the occupational structure will likewise have an effect upon library materials and their use. In the case of one segment, for instance, Hauser and Taitel note an increase during the 1950's of almost two-thirds in the number of professional, technical, and kindred workers. Accordingly, a similar increase may be expected in the 1960's, although not necessarily of the same magnitude as that of the past decade. The growth of this particular part of the occupational structure again has clear implications for library resources. Similar analyses for other population segments would reveal significant facts.

Besides population changes, there are other factors which may affect library resources. The necessity of having physical and bibliographical access to them has been pointed out by the specific examples listed by V. W. Clapp,² and the following general factors are suggested in his paper as of significance: (1) full and improved cooperation among libraries in the acquisition, processing, storing, and servicing of resources; (2) complete coordination of the various types of materials in order that the best possible service can be rendered; (3) technological advances, especially in the field of cataloging, copying processes, microforms, sound recordings, and interlibrary electronic communications; (4) improvement and perfecting of mechanical and electronic devices for the retrieval of stored data; (5) rising costs of library materials upon the maintenance of adequate collections.

Cooperation, the first mentioned factor, is a much discussed subject in library circles. *Library Trends* devoted an entire issue to it in January 1958.³ Its proponents maintain that cooperation is an absolute necessity if the handicaps inherent within the acquisition, processing, storing, and servicing of resources by individual libraries are ever to be overcome. Limited and inadequate budgets also add a note of urgency to the pleas for cooperation. Despite the best efforts and great accomplishments of single libraries, serious gaps still remain in library facilities and services when these accommodations are considered on a nationwide basis.

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Among the recent writers who have treated library cooperation are Esterquest,⁴ Carlson,⁵ Metcalf,⁶ and Stanford.⁷ They have pointed out the necessity for and the beneficial results of cooperation, the high costs frequently involved, and the practical difficulties. It might also be mentioned that Eastlick,⁸ after a study of four hundred public documents and questionnaires to state library agencies, has concluded recently that cooperation is often a matter of lip service.

Cooperation among libraries has taken forms such as acquisitions, cataloging, storage, bibliographical centers, reference centers, inter-library loans, joint surveys of resources, and interlibrary councils for various purposes. Only a few references will be cited as examples of this rich literature.

The current status of successful cooperative cataloging, for example, is covered by Bendix,⁹ Eckford,¹⁰ and Kenney.¹¹ The effort to expedite cataloging by having printed cards available at the time the book is received from the publisher or dealer is described in the "Cataloging-in-Source" article.¹² After the Library of Congress decided not to continue this experiment because of cost and other difficulties, the persisting attempt to achieve the end is brought up-to-date in a *Library Journal* article of April 1, 1961.¹³ Vosper, although covering only a small part of the acquisition problem, discusses Farmington Plan difficulties, which have much significance for cooperation in general.¹⁴

Cooperation has had a long history. It has progressed steadily, although perhaps slowly and at times with much discouragement. It seems certain that cooperation will take place on an ever-increasing scale. Growing cost of materials, the scarcity of many resources, and the demands for efficient service make cooperation a required factor in the years ahead.

Books, serials, maps, newspapers, technical reports, sound recordings, and motion pictures all seem to go their own ways insofar as bibliographic control or coordinated use is concerned. Writers sometimes question why catalogers generally have restricted themselves to books and monographs and left the making of periodical indexes to the commercial interests such as the Wilson Company, *Chemical Abstracts*, and others. Researchers and other seekers of information ask why the indexing of data does not go even further and cover all types of resources with some sort of unified control.

In view of pending developments, and with the help of individual initiative, cooperative endeavors, subsidies, and grants, it seems safe to predict that the goal of complete indexing may be achieved. Co-

ordination of all or nearly all resource items should be a reality before the end of the next two decades.

Technological advances will be felt especially in cataloging, low-cost copying of resources, microforms, sound recordings, and interlibrary communication. In the case of cataloging, the automatic typewriter¹⁵ and various processes for card reproduction will reduce the cost and time element.¹⁶ The Council on Library Resources just made a grant to the Library Technology Project of the American Library Association for a thorough study of catalog card reproduction and the development of a satisfactory machine for this purpose.¹⁷

Interlibrary communication, including such processes as teletype, facsimile, and televised transmission of information about resources, should make advances, especially if the need for facts is urgent, immediate, and sufficient in volume, and if costs of the operation can be kept reasonably low.^{18, 19} These devices and others yet to be developed will facilitate access to all library materials. It may be expected also that business and industry will perfect many machines which libraries can adapt profitably to the servicing of their resources.

Retrieval of information stored in resources is a vital factor.²⁰ Common devices in the past have been the catalog in printed form, the card catalog, and the periodical index. Under the efforts of scientists and others, machines have been and are now being developed to store, search for, and report back at high speed the desired coded data. The subject has been discussed in many books, articles, and talks. It is also treated elsewhere in this issue. The machines presently available may be too expensive, specialized, and complicated for most libraries. It is probable, however, that technological developments will improve these machines during the next two decades so that the rapid recovery of stored data will be realized on a scale beyond that now envisioned.

Rising costs of resources are of grave concern to the library administrator involved in the maintenance of adequate and balanced collections. This subject of costs is well covered in a publication by Schick and Kurth.²¹

The authors note, with a supporting table of price indexes, that since 1947-49 (a base period of relatively stable prices) the cost in 1960 of general books, periodicals, and serials services increased more than that of other commodities. Their figures show also that the average retail price of general books in 1960 was \$5.24, 46 per cent more than the average price in 1947-49, and the average retail subscription

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price of all periodicals was \$5.32 in 1960, compared with \$3.62 in 1947-49, an increase of 47 per cent.²²

No projections of price trends are presented for the next two decades, but the information given in the publication clearly shows what has happened during the last 12 years. It indicates what the problem of acquiring adequate resources will be, if prices of these materials continue their upward trend and library budgets remain comparatively fixed.

This overview of resources is intended to be an introduction to the individual papers on books, serials, and audio-visual materials. As indicated in it, there are factors which will affect both the number and the kind of library materials in the future. Population changes, full cooperation, improved coordination, technological advances, perfected retrieval systems, and rising costs of materials will help to determine the future of library resources in the next two decades.

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